

CHIEF, FE DIVISION

9 January 1956

CHIEF, FINANCE DIVISION

COMPARATIVE COST INTERESTATION, TRAVEL FROM SAN FRANCISCO TO D.C.

1. Finance Division regrets the delay in answering your memorandum dated 29 November 1955; however, in view of the far reaching effect in resolving your questions it seemed appropriate to have the matter reviewed by General Counsel.

2. The questions presented in paragraph 5 of your memorandum are answered below in the order presented.

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- (a) The policy of holding travelers to cost by common carrier is not only valid but in conformance with the policy expressed in [REDACTED] and Standardized Government Travel Regulations. (para. 12)

In order to justify deviation from the above policy both Agency regulations and GTR require that there be a determination that use of a privately owned automobile on a mileage basis is more advantageous to the government.

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[REDACTED] contains the determination that travel by personally owned automobile on a mileage basis is more advantageous to the government in any case when two or more persons (including children 12 years of age or over) travel together.

Responsibility for formalizing the determination as to mode of travel and reimbursement therefore rests with the officer authorized to approve travel orders. The terms of the approved travel order constitute the basis for examination and payment of claim by the Finance Division, and in the absence of contravention of regulations or law, are binding as to rates and methods of reimbursement for travel.

In accordance with the above, notwithstanding the number of persons traveling together, in any instance wherein the travel approving officer checks the block on the travel order which limits travel to comparative cost by common carrier, Finance Division is required to limit reimbursement to such cost - conversely, wherever determination is made that the mileage basis is more advantageous to the government and the appropriate block on the travel order is so marked, reimbursement will be effected on the basis established by the order regardless of the number of persons traveling together. In arriving at his determination as to the method of reimbursement, the travel approving officer is, of course, guided and limited by the applicable provisions of regulations, including

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[REDACTED]

In any case wherein the travel approving officer authorizes travel by privately owned automobile and fails to indicate by checking the appropriate block for the allowance for privately owned automobile, the travel order will be returned for completion.

- (b) 1. The cost of shipment of a privately owned automobile is not a proper addition to the constructive cost determination. (See memo from General Counsel dated 6 January 1956, copy attached).
2. In any instance wherein the traveler returns by surface, the cost of air freight would not be a proper addition to the constructive cost of travel by common carrier. If return from overseas was by air, such cost would be a factor in determining constructive cost.
- (c) As indicated above, cost of shipment of auto is not proper for consideration in determining constructive cost.
- (d) Although cost of shipment of auto is not a proper item for inclusion in determining constructive cost, the mode of transportation from the field station to San Francisco does determine the basis for cost determination of allowable costs. As indicated in [REDACTED] constructive cost is determined on the basis of the mode (air or surface) authorized, or if alternate modes authorized on basis of mode used over major portion of route.
- (e) The basis for the above determination is, we believe, supported by the references cited above. If, however, it is not clear or your office holds a different view on these matters we shall be glad to discuss the matter further.

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3. With respect to the claims of [REDACTED] as has already been discussed with [REDACTED] these vouchers were not adequately handled by Finance Division in that they were processed without determination by the travel approving officer as to the method of reimbursement. This matter has now been adjusted and we trust the confusion which occurred in these cases will not reoccur.

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